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WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548

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C1 The Honorable Robert O. Tiernan
House of Representatives

R Dear Mr. Tiernan:

In response to your request of September 4, 1973, we have inquired into the allegation that the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) may have contracted with certain optical manufacturers to design and construct optical systems previously developed by these companies for the Air Force.

As you have been informed, these Air Force programs carry a high security classification and we are not authorized to furnish any detailed information on this matter. We hope the following information will be helpful.

The Department of Defense (DOD) supports a considerable level of classified technology development underway throughout the aerospace industry. NASA relies heavily upon that same industry. In order to avoid duplication of effort and to enable both NASA and DOD to take maximum advantage of the work each is supporting, very complete coordination and information exchange continues at all appropriate levels of both agencies. There are, at the senior management levels, absolutely no security barriers between the two agencies that hamper the necessary exchange of information. Specifically, the Earth Resources Technology Satellite sensor systems developed by NASA utilized prior DOD research and development experience.

We believe that the special coordination procedures should preclude unwarranted duplication of effort. DOD uses special contract audit procedures (with which we are familiar) in such cases, and we feel that the combination of the special coordination and audit procedures provides adequate assurance that duplicate charges have not been paid.

We do not plan to distribute this report further unless you agree or publicly announce its contents.

Sincerely yours,

Comptroller General
of the United States

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